

Testimony in Support of HB6565,
An Act Concerning Humane Education

March 9, 2009

Dear Members of the Committee:

I have been a teacher at Plainville High School in Plainville, Connecticut for more than twenty years. Although I am a social studies instructor, students come to me with concerns about dissection because they know that I am in favor of student choice regarding this issue. For years, students with serious reservations about, or even outright revulsion to, classroom dissection had to choose between a deeply held belief and a passing grade.

It is heartbreaking to talk to a teary-eyed student who loves his pet cats but is being forced to slice into them in science class, all the while trying to hide his emotions from his classmates. It is equally painful to watch teenaged ethical vegetarians panic about what to do when the fetal pig dissection approaches in science class.

Last year senior Allie Petit worked with our science department chair and the board of education, and Plainville instituted a new policy allowing students to opt out of dissection under certain circumstances. This was and is a step in the right direction. There are many cost effective alternatives that are educationally sound and superior to animal "specimens." Even top universities like Harvard, Yale and Stamford no longer use animals to train their medical students.

I am asking Connecticut to do what Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, and several other states have done; give students a choice regarding classroom dissection. Right now this is a battle that must be refought in every school district where there is a student or parent willing to challenge the system. A state law offering students a choice whether or not to dissect is the most effective way to ensure that all of our students have the same opportunities and choices, regardless of the school that they attend.

Please support HB6565.

Sincerely,

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